

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) complements the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and is coordinated by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. FSSE (pronounced “fessie”) measures faculty members’ expectations of student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. The survey also collects information about how faculty members spend their time on professorial activities, such as teaching and scholarship, and the kinds of learning experiences their institutions emphasize.

FSSE results can be used to identify areas of institutional strength, as well as aspects of the undergraduate experience that may warrant attention. The information can be a catalyst for productive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of students’ educational experiences.

This overview provides general information about the institutions and faculty members that participated in the 2014 administration of FSSE, and highlights ways institutions can use their results. In the first section, we compare the characteristics of FSSE participating institutions to those of NSSE participating institutions and those of the U.S. profile of bachelor’s-granting institutions. We also compare the characteristics of FSSE respondents to those of faculty members at U.S. bachelor’s-granting institutions and provide general information about response rates. In the second section, we provide guidelines for using and interpreting FSSE 2014 results, and highlight resources for analyzing and presenting FSSE findings. Resources intended to help with the use of FSSE data are also on the FSSE Web site.

## FSSE 2014 Institutions and Respondents

In the 2014 administration of FSSE, 18,860 faculty members responded from 143 bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities (139 U.S., 3 Canadian, and 1 American university abroad) that selected their own faculty samples. Faculty members at participating institutions were sent email invitations asking them to respond to the online survey. Nearly all FSSE institutions (136) also administered NSSE to their students in 2014; 7 had used NSSE in a previous year. Having recent data from NSSE allows participating

## FSSE 2014 Overview

institutions to examine how faculty members and students respond to similar questions. Each campus receives electronic copies of its reports and data file, along with a list of participating institutions. The list is also publicly available through the FSSE Web site.

For the FSSE 2014 administration, institutions were able to add topical modules and consortium items to the end of the core FSSE instrument. This year, the module on Academic Advising was appended by 48 institutions, Learning with Technology by 22, Development of Transferable Skills by 20, Civic Engagement by 14, Experiences with Writing by 12, Experiences with Diverse Perspectives by 11, and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning by 10; and 18 institutions appended consortium items. Institutions could append as many as two modules or a module and a set of consortium items.

Tables 1 through 3 on the following pages provide more information about the participating institutions and faculty members who responded to the survey. While included here and in each institution’s *FSSE 2014 Respondent Profile*, certain demographics (e.g., gender, rank, and employment status) were withheld from each institution’s data file to ensure that responses remain anonymous.



University of Tennessee at Martin

## Profile of FSSE 2014 Institutions

The FSSE 2014 institutions were similar in many ways to the U.S. profile of bachelor's-granting colleges and universities (Table 1). Like NSSE 2014, however, there are a few places, noted below, where the FSSE 2014 profile differed slightly from the U.S. profile. While these differences exist between the profiles, the distribution of FSSE 2014 institutions reflects a wide range of U.S. institutions, which helps ensure that FSSE results represent a broad cross section of U.S. faculty members.

**Table 1**

### Profile of FSSE and NSSE 2014 U.S. Institutions and All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions<sup>a</sup>

Institution Characteristics	FSSE 2014	NSSE 2014	U.S. <sup>b</sup>
<b>Carnegie Basic Classification<sup>c</sup></b>			
Research Universities (very high research activity)	3%	5%	6%
Research Universities (high research activity)	7%	7%	6%
Doctoral/Research Universities	3%	5%	5%
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	34%	29%	25%
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	13%	13%	11%
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	9%	7%	8%
Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences	14%	18%	16%
Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	17%	18%	23%
<b>Control</b>			
Public	47%	43%	34%
Private	53%	57%	66%
<b>Undergraduate Enrollment</b>			
Fewer than 1,000	11%	11%	18%
1,000 – 2,499	33%	32%	33%
2,500 – 4,999	20%	21%	19%
5,000 – 9,999	22%	19%	14%
10,000 – 19,999	12%	11%	10%
20,000 or more	3%	6%	6%
<b>Region</b>			
New England	5%	8%	8%
Mideast	16%	20%	18%
Great Lakes	10%	14%	15%
Plains	16%	10%	10%
Southeast	33%	29%	25%
Southwest	7%	8%	7%
Rocky Mountains	2%	4%	4%
Far West	9%	9%	11%
Outlying Areas	1%	1%	2%
<b>Locale</b>			
City	38%	44%	47%
Suburban	18%	24%	26%
Town	36%	28%	21%
Rural	8%	4%	6%

a. All percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in this table. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

b. U.S. percentages are based on data from the 2012 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics file.

c. For information on the Carnegie Foundation's Basic Classification, see [classifications.carnegiefoundation.org](http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org)

## Carnegie 2010 Basic Classification

Compared to the NSSE and U.S. profiles, FSSE had a larger proportion of Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs) and a smaller proportion of Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields.

### Control

FSSE had a larger proportion of public institutions compared to the U.S. profile.

### Undergraduate Enrollment

Like NSSE, FSSE had a larger proportion of institutions with undergraduate enrollments between 5,000 and 9,999 and a smaller proportion with fewer than 1,000.

### Region

FSSE had a smaller proportion of institutions in the Great Lakes but larger proportions in the Plains and Southeast compared to the other profiles.

### Locale

FSSE had a smaller proportion of institutions in cities and suburbs, and a larger proportion in towns compared to the other profiles.



Queens University of Charlotte

## Profile of FSSE 2014 Respondents

Tables 2 and 3 show selected characteristics of faculty members who completed FSSE in 2014. FSSE columns represents faculty members who responded to the FSSE survey and the U.S. columns represent the U.S. profile of instructional faculty and staff at all bachelor's-granting institutions based on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

### Gender

The distribution of FSSE respondents by gender was similar to the U.S. proportion. Male respondents slightly outnumbered female respondents (7,795 males vs. 7,566 females).

**Table 2**

#### Characteristics of FSSE 2014 Respondents and Faculty Population at All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions

Respondent Characteristics	FSSE Respondents	U.S. <sup>a</sup>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	51%	54%
Female	49%	46%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	<1%
Asian	5%	7%
Black or African American	6%	6%
Hispanic or Latino	3%	5%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
White	72%	75%
Other <sup>b</sup>	2%	—
Multiracial	3%	1%
Preferred not to respond <sup>b</sup>	10%	5%
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Full-time	81%	57%
Part-time	19%	43%
<b>Rank of Full-Time Faculty<sup>c</sup></b>		
Professor	29%	26%
Associate professor	27%	23%
Assistant professor	26%	25%
Instructor or lecturer	15%	14%
Other <sup>d</sup>	3%	12%

a. U.S. percentages come from the 2011 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.

b. Category did not exist in the 2011 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component. U.S. percentage for "Preferred not to respond" row is for faculty whose race was "unknown."

c. Rank is not reported in IPEDS for part-time faculty. Among FSSE respondents, most part-timers are either instructors or lecturers (66%).

d. Includes instructors with alternative appointment types (e.g., administrators and researchers).

### Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic profile of FSSE respondents was similar to that of all U.S. faculty. The greatest discrepancy existed in the "Prefer not to respond" row, where 10% of FSSE respondents chose not to indicate a race/ethnicity while race/ethnicity was unknown for only 5% of faculty members in IPEDS.

### Employment Status

A larger proportion of FSSE respondents were full-time faculty members compared to the U.S. profile, which may reflect the decision of some institutions to survey only full-time faculty as well as the possibility that part-time faculty respond at a lower rate than their full-time colleagues.

### Academic Rank

FSSE had a smaller proportion of full-time faculty falling into the "Other" category.

### Discipline

The FSSE and U.S. profiles by disciplinary area were similar across most categories. A greater proportion of FSSE respondents had appointments in the arts and humanities and the physical sciences, mathematics, and computer science area. A smaller proportion of respondents were from the communications, media, and public relations area and the health professions. These differences likely relate to the types of institutions that participate in FSSE.

## Response Rates

After adjusting for faculty members who could not be reached (usually because of incorrect email addresses), a response rate (total number of responses divided by the total number of faculty members contacted) was calculated for each FSSE institution. In 2014, 41% of the faculty contacted responded to the survey. Response rates at individual institutions ranged from 14% to 84%. The average institutional response rate was 48%.

**Table 3**

#### Percentage of Faculty by Disciplinary Area

Disciplinary Area	FSSE <sup>a</sup>	U.S. <sup>b</sup>
Arts and Humanities	25%	15%
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources	8%	7%
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science	12%	7%
Social Science	13%	13%
Business	10%	8%
Communications, Media, and Public Relations	4%	12%
Education	11%	8%
Engineering	4%	5%
Health Professions	10%	21%
Social Science Professions	3%	4%

a. FSSE distributions based on 16,357 respondents from these disciplinary areas.

b. U.S. percentages come from the 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.



## Using FSSE Results

Before sharing FSSE results on campus, individuals should become familiar with the nature of the data, the reports, and “story line” of their institution’s performance.

### Becoming Familiar with FSSE Reports and Resources

Each institution receives several reports and a data file that will help individuals better understand their FSSE results. Reports are delivered in the *Institutional Report 2014* binder and are available electronically through the Institution Interface (each campus has up to three representatives who can access the Interface from the NSSE or FSSE Web sites using their own unique username and password). The data file, codebook, list of participating institutions, this overview, and other supporting materials are also available through the Interface.



Wofford College

Institution-specific resources include:

- A *FSSE-NSSE Combined Report 2014* presenting faculty results side-by-side with student results, which allows institutions to identify areas of correspondence.
- A *FSSE 2014 Frequencies* report providing the response percentages for each survey item broken down by the level of the students taught by faculty members.
- A *FSSE 2014 Respondent Profile* report summarizing demographic information from faculty members who responded. Much of this information is not contained in the institutional data file in order to protect respondents’ identities.
- A *FSSE 2014 Administrative Summary* report highlighting important administration details, including details about your sample, response rates, survey customization choices, and recruitment message schedule.

- A data file allowing for additional analyses while still protecting the identity of individual respondents (some demographic data are not contained in the file; see the “How Does FSSE Protect Respondent Anonymity?” section below).
- The *FSSE 2014 Codebook* providing details about each survey question, including variable names and response sets.
- Topical Module and Consortium reports providing results for those institutions that administered additional survey items.

In addition, the FSSE Web site ([fsse.iub.edu](http://fsse.iub.edu)) includes several important documents and resources:

- Facsimiles of the core FSSE survey and topical module instruments.
- Frequency reports by Carnegie Basic Classification category and disciplinary area based on faculty responses from all participating institutions.
- Topical findings that can be used as examples of different ways to use FSSE data alone (e.g., examining the proportion of class time devoted to lecturing, small group work, and experiential activities by disciplinary area) or in combination with NSSE (e.g., comparing faculty expectations to faculty estimates and student self-reports of time spent studying). Topical findings can also be used for comparative purposes.
- Examples of how to display FSSE results in tables and graphs.
- A facilitator’s guide to assist in presentations of FSSE findings to campus audiences.
- Examples of how other institutions share their FSSE results with different audiences.

### Checking Data Quality

An essential early step in reviewing a campus’s results is comparing the *FSSE 2014 Respondent Profile* report with institutional data on faculty—the closer the characteristics match, the more confidence an institution can have that their respondents represent the faculty surveyed.

Another way to gauge data quality is through sampling error, an estimate of the margin by which the “true” score for an institution on a given item could differ from the reported score for one or more reasons, such as differences in important characteristics between the sample and the populations. For example, if 60% reply “very often” to a particular item and the sampling error is  $\pm 4\%$ , there is a 95% chance that the population value is between 56% and 64%.

## Communicating FSSE Results

We offer the following suggestions for communicating FSSE results to interested parties:

- Examine representativeness as described above.
- Check the sample size and sampling error since questions often arise as to whether a small sample adequately represents the population from which it is drawn.
- Use student and faculty matched items to stimulate discussion about student engagement, its relationship to learning, and which engagement activities to emphasize on campus. Faculty and student responses can differ for many reasons. For example, questions for students and faculty may be framed differently (e.g., over an academic year or in a particular course), or FSSE and NSSE response options for a specific item may not match exactly. A strong understanding of the instruments as well as one's institutional context should help in interpreting differences.



Winthrop University

- Meet with those responsible for faculty development and undergraduate improvement initiatives to begin sharing results and discussing ways in which FSSE data can be used to enhance teaching and learning. Use the worksheets in *Working with FSSE* and *NSSE Findings: A Facilitator's Guide* to help focus these discussions (see the Resources section under the Tools and Services tab on the FSSE Web site).
- Consult *Using FSSE Data* and *Using NSSE Data* (found online or in the User Resources section of the *Institutional Report 2014* binder) for examples of how other institutions use FSSE and NSSE in professional development and assessment initiatives.
- Contact the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice ([nsse.iub.edu/institute](https://nsse.iub.edu/institute)) for additional ideas about making the best use of FSSE and NSSE results on campus.

## How Does FSSE Protect Respondent Anonymity?

The FSSE project takes several measures to ensure the anonymity of respondents. For example:

- Each institution's data file excludes faculty members' responses to demographic questions such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, number of years as a faculty member, appointment status, rank, and tenure status.
- To mask faculty members' particular disciplines, disciplines have been collapsed into ten categories (see codebook) that parallel major organizational units on campus.
- Customized reports by faculty demographics are available for institutions wishing to examine FSSE findings while protecting respondent anonymity. The FSSE Report Builder-Institution Version (see the FSSE Web site) or FSSE staff can assist in the production of such reports. For reports produced by FSSE staff, costs vary by the complexity of the request. Contact FSSE ([fsse@indiana.edu](mailto:fsse@indiana.edu)) for information.



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